

Message Text

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PAGE 01 FREETO 02521 171232Z

60

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 PA-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2022

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 2521

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, CH, NI

SUBJECT: NEW NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO PRC

REF: LAGOS 10081

1. NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO PEKING, JOLLY TANKO YUSUF, DEPARTED FREETOWN OCTOBER 15 AFTER FIVE YEARS AS HIGH COMMISSIONER. HIS PERFORMANCE HERE IS WIDELY VIEWED AS HAVING BEEN OUTSTANDING, PERHAPS THE BEST AMBASSADOR TO HAVE SERVED HERE.

2. HAVING KNOWN EACH OTHER IN EARLY 60S IN NIGERIA, YUSUF AND I BECAME CLOSE FRIENDS. HE HAS BEEN HELPFUL ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE AND STYLE, AND MADE POINT OF STRESSING THIS FRIENDSHIP TO SIERRA LEONEANS FROM PRESIDENT ON DOWN ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS. HE HAS REPUTATION FOR OPENESS AND HONESTY, AND CLAIMS THAT HE HAS REGISTERED HIS ASSETS WITH FMG AT TIME OF EACH ASSIGNMENT TO PROVE HIS NOT BEING CORRUPT. HE HAS HELD LEADERSHIP OF AFRICAN DEIPLOMATS HERE, AND HIS VIBRANT PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL ABILITIES WILL IKELY MAKE HIM MAJOR FORCE AMONG AFRICANS IN PEKING.

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3. YUSUF HAS TRAVELLED TO STATES TWICE (ALTHOUGH

HAS NOT SERVED THERE AS STATED REFTTEL) AND HAS SON IN GRAUDATE SCHOOL IN CALIFORNIA. EARLY EDUCATION AND FIRST EMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA WAS WITH CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH AMERICAN (MOSTLY FROM MICHIGAN) MISSIONARIES, AND YUSUF MAINTAINS CLOSE CONTACT WITH MISSION STILL. YUSUF HAS HAD CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH AMERICAN WITH OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM IN NIGERIA, ESPECIALLY ONE EVERETT TIERFELTER.

4. POLITICALLY, YUSUF CONSIDERS HIMSELF QUOTE A PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE UNQUOTE, WHATEVER THAT MEANS. HE SHOWS STRONG SYMPATHIES FOR WESTERN IDEAS AND INDIVIDUALS. FURTHERMORE, HE VIEWS PEKING AS INTERIM ASSIGNMENT AND HOPES FOR LONDON OR WASHINGTON AFTER TWO OR THREE YEARS THERE.

5. YUSUF IS VERY MUCH A POLITICIAN OF NIGERIA'S PAST WHO INTENDS TO RETURN TO POLITICS WHEN CIVILIAN RULE RETURNS. AS RESULT, HE AND WIFE AND PLEASED TO BE AWAY FROM LAGOS AT THIS TIME, WHEN BEING THERE COULD LEAD HIM TO BECOME INVOLVED PREMATURELY. THEY ALSO PLEASED NOT TO HAVE BEEN RETIRED LIKE SO MANY NIGERIAN OFFICIALS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY ARE NOT PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO GO TO PEKING WHICH HAS BAD REPUTATION AMONG AFRICAN DEIPLOMATS, ESPECIALLY HERE.

6. AS CLOSE FRIEND OF FMG CHIEF OF STAFF YAKUBU DANJUMA (AS HE WAS TO FORMER PRESIDENT GOWAN), WHO BORN IN SAME VILLAGE OF TAKUM, YUSUF CAN AND IS IKELY TO INSERT SUBSTANTIVE IDEAS INTO FMG MACHINERY.

7. MRS. YUSUF, ALLEGEDLY FROM ROYAL FAMILY IN BENIN, HAS BEEN DYNAMIC AND OUTSPOKEN COMPANION. AFTER RUN-INS WITH WIFE OF USSR AMBASSADOR, SHE IS DEEPLY ANTI-COMMUNIST. ALTHOUGH SHE HAS MAINTAINED CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH IMPORTANT WOMEN HERE TO BENEFIT OF HUSBAND'S PERFORMANCE, SHE HAS LOOKED DOWN ON SIERRA LEONE, AN ATTITUDE WHICH SHE HAS BEEN ABLE TO HIDE LOCALLY. SHE HAS BEEN GREAT FRIEND TO MY WIFE, CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVING UNDERTAKEN ROLE OF INTRODUCING HER TO SIERRA LEONE WOMEN AS A "SISTER."

8. DEFINITELY BELIEVE FRIENDSHIP WITH YUSUF'S WILL BE PRODUCTIVE FOR AMBASSADOR AND MRS. BUSH. SAMUELS

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